

AZERBAIJAN UXO: DONORS' MEETING TO SUPPORT FINAL PHASE

March 2009



ANAMA personnel clearing a collapsed ammunition store – indicative of the problems at Saloglu

February 18, 2009 – A Donors' meeting took place at NATO HQ, Brussels to examine the Final Phase of a project to clear Unexploded Ordnance (UXO) from the site of a former ammunition depot at Saloglu, Azerbaijan. This is a NATO Partnership for Peace (PfP) Trust Fund project that started in December 2005. The project is led by Turkey and supported by additional 15 contributors: Australia, Azerbaijan, Bulgaria, Czech Republic, Finland, Iceland, Italy, Japan, Latvia, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Norway, Switzerland, UNDP and the United States.

This has been a particularly complex and hazardous project. The work is being undertaken by the Azerbaijan National Agency for Mine Action (ANAMA) and at the time of writing they had cleared 348 hectares of the less hazardous area, known as the Green Zone; had surface cleared 220 hectares of the more hazardous area, known as the Red Zone; and had cleared 83 hectares of sub-surface munitions from the Red Zone (137 hectares remain). So far in excess of 326,000 UXOs have been recovered from the site.



In May 2008, it was identified that the safe and effective completion of the final phase of the project would require an enhancement to the capability of ANAMA. The core of the enhancement is the introduction of mechanical assistance due to the quantity of collapsed reinforced concrete structures, and the concentrations of deep buried ordnance. This is a significant change in methodology and will require a budget of around EUR 1.9 M and an additional 24 months to complete the task. The technical aspects of these proposals were outlined at the Donors' meeting.

Deep buried ordnance. Without mechanical assistance these items took 4 man-days to excavate.